

EATING THE SACRIFICE

NO. 2528

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, AUGUST 1, 1897
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*“And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them:
but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy.”*
Exodus 29:33

ON two following Sabbath mornings, I have spoken concerning the sacrifices under the law. Our first sermon was “Putting the Hand upon the Head of the Sacrifice,” and the next was, “Slaying the Sacrifice” [Sermons #1771 and #1772]. Now we are to make an advance and to speak about the eating of the sacrifice, for in certain cases the offerer ate a portion of that which had been presented to God.

It has been said by some people, who are very particular in drawing nice distinctions, that there was no eating of a sacrifice in which there was any connection with sin. I beg to differ from that opinion and I have showed you that every sacrifice had something to do with sin, since no sacrifice would have been needed if the man bringing it had not been a sinner.

And here, in this case, I might have selected many texts to teach the truth I want to bring out just now, but I have specially chosen this one because it says, “They shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made.” You all know that a covering is only needed for those who are naked or who have something that requires to be hidden. So, the atonement, or the covering, is evidently intended for the guilty—and has something to do with sin—yet of the things wherewith the atonement was made, Aaron’s sons were to eat, so that there is to be an eating, a joyous reception into ourselves even of those things which have a connection with the putting away of sin.

The first thing that an offerer did with his victim when he brought it was to appropriate it to himself by laying his hands upon it. So, when a sinner comes to Christ, his first act is to lay his hands upon Christ, that Christ may be shown to belong to the sinner, and that the sinner’s guilt may be transferred to Christ and borne by Him as the sinner’s Substitute.

In after life, we are continually to look to Christ and by faith to lay our hands upon Him. But we are to advance to a yet more lively and more intensely spiritual way of appropriating Him to ourselves. This is indicated in the text by eating.

“There is life for a look at the Crucified One;”

but after you have begun to live, the substance of that life comes through feeding upon the sacrifice.

The first appropriation—the laying on of the hands—is an outward act. But the later appropriation—feeding upon the sacrifice, taking it into yourself—is altogether an inward matter. You who are not yet saved have not at present anything to do with this eating of the sacrifice.

Your first business is to look to Jesus—not so much spiritually to enjoy Him as, by faith, to look to Him as outside of you, to be regarded by the eye of faith while you, a poor guilty sinner, simply look to Him and find salvation in Him. It is afterwards, when you shall have made some advance in the divine life, when you shall have clearly seen the Victim sacrificed and His blood making an atonement for your sins, that you shall come and feed upon Jesus Christ.

At the time of the Passover, the Jew must first take the lamb, and kill it, and sprinkle the blood on the lintel and the two side posts of his house. And after that he must go inside, and when the door is shut, feed upon that lamb whose blood is sprinkled outside. He must eat the Passover supper that he may be refreshed before starting on his journey through the wilderness.

Let not this distinction be forgotten—the eating of the sacrifice is not intended to give life, for no dead man can eat—but to sustain the life which is there already. A believing look at Christ makes you live, but spiritual life must be fed and sustained—and the feeding of that life is explained by our Savior in the words I read to you just now—“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed”—spiritual meat and spiritual drink to support the spiritual life which God has given.

Hence it was ordained, even under the law, that after the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify the priests, they were to come, and sit down, and “eat those things wherewith the atonement was made.”

I. The first thing about which I have to speak to you at this time is, THE PARTICIPATION—the eating of the sacrifice.

So, first, I will *describe it*. We are to “eat those things wherewith the atonement was made,” to participate in Christ, to take Him into ourselves. The act of eating is a very common but a very expressive method of setting forth participation, for it is entirely personal. Nobody can eat for you or drink for you. It is personally for yourself that you partake of bread, and the bread goes into yourself, to build up yourself, to be assimilated by yourself into yourself so as to become part of yourself.

And dear friend, the Lord Jesus Christ must thus be received into your heart and soul by yourself, for yourself, and must remain within yourself, you exercising upon Him continually a blessed act of faith by which you have communion and fellowship with Him. This can’t be done by any sponsor, or any proxy, or through any means—it must be done personal[y, directly, and distinctly by yourself.

God help you to receive Christ into yourself! That point, surely, is plain enough. As a man himself receives food into himself, to become part of himself, so must you and I receive the Lord Jesus into ourselves, for ourselves, to be interwoven with ourselves, so that we twain shall be one.

This participation is not only personal, but it is distinctly inward. There is no receiving Christ by any exercise of the flesh, by aught that we can do externally. It is within that we are to receive Christ, with our heart, with our spirit. We are not to regard Him alone as yonder on the cross, but as formed in us the hope of glory, as coming into us to sit as King upon His throne, and to reign within us—for it is into our innermost nature that we are to receive the blessed truth concerning Christ and His atonement.

And it is an active reception, too. A man can receive some things into himself passively. Oil may penetrate into his flesh. Certain drugs may be injected beneath the skin and so may permeate the blood. But eating is an active exercise, a thing done by a man, not in his sleep, but with the full intent that he may receive into himself that which he eats. So must you receive the Lord Jesus Christ, feeding upon Him willingly, actively taking Him into yourself with the full consent and power of your whole being.

You know, also, that eating arises from a sense of need and it leads to a sense of satisfaction. The most of people eat because they are hungry, though I suppose there are some who eat simply because the time has come, whether they need food or not. I have heard that the best time for a poor man to have his dinner is when he can get it, and that the best time for a rich man to have his dinner is when he wants it. And I think there is something in the saying.

In this spiritual feeding, if you will feed on Christ when you can get Him, you may begin at once. What is wanted in most cases is an appetite, but when a man has an appetite for Christ, when he says, “I must have pardon, for I am a sinner. I must have a renewed heart, for I have an evil one. I must have spiritual life, for I am in a state of spiritual death,” then he has the appetite which only Christ can satisfy. Then, when he receives Christ into his heart, there follows a sense of satisfaction as you have sometimes

seen in the case of a person who has enjoyed a good meal. He wants no more. He lies down and is perfectly content.

Oh, but what a satisfaction Christ brings to the soul that feeds upon Him! When you have fed on Him, dear friends, how full you have become—not to repletion, for the more you receive of Him the more He will enlarge your capacity—but you have received Him to the fullness of satisfaction.

Do you recall that Psalm where David says, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips”? Oh, yes! and it is so with us when we receive Christ into our heart, then are we filled to the full and this is the kind of participation which is meant in our text.

We are to “eat those things wherewith the atonement was made”—we are to receive Christ personally, inwardly, actively, because of our soul’s hunger, and that our feeding upon Him may lead to an intense satisfaction with Him. Do you want another Savior, you who have received Christ Jesus into your souls? I know that you do not. Is there something, after all, that you desire to add to the blessed Lord and His divine work? I know that there is not, for “ye are complete in him”—perfectly satisfied with Christ Jesus, filled up to the brim with all spiritual blessings.

Thus I have tried to describe this participation, now I want you to *practice it*. Notice that the text says, “They shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made.” Among “those things” there was flesh, there was bread in the basket, and so forth. And they were to eat of all those things. I gather from this injunction that you and I must endeavor to feed upon all that makes up the atonement and all that is connected with the atonement.

For instance, let us feed upon the Father’s love that gave the Lord Jesus Christ to bleed and die. Then let us feed on the fact of the divine person of the Lord Jesus. Oh, what a blessed loaf that is! What is the use of a Savior to me if He is not divine? I am sure that nothing short of deity can ever save such a soul as mine from the sin in which it is found.

But Christ is “very God of very God,” so I feed upon that glorious truth. Will not you do the same, dear friends? Then feed upon the fact of His perfect humanity, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, of a human mother born, as certainly man as we are. Oh, there is many a satisfying meal in the blessed doctrine of the true and indisputable humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Then, when you have fed upon Christ’s deity and humanity, feed upon the willingness with which He came to save us. Long before He was born into this world, His delights were with the sons of men and He looked forward with joy to the time of His appearing. “Lo I come,” said He, “in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.”

In the fullness of time He came, leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills, that He might save His people. It is no unwilling Savior who has come to save you and me, beloved. Feed on that sweet truth. Think of the love that did lie at the back of it all, the love He had to His church and people, which moved Him to lay aside all His glory and take upon Himself all our shame—to surrender the ineffable splendor of His throne to be nailed up to the shameful cross.

O brethren, there is a great feast for the soul in the love of Christ! This is “butter in a lordly dish.” There was never such wine, even at a king’s marriage, as that which Christ Himself made, and we can truly say to Him, “Thou hast kept the best wine until now.”

Ay, but I believe that there is food for us at every stage of the Redeemer’s passion. There are sweet fruits to be gathered even in dark Gethsemane. There are precious clusters of the vine to be found at Gabbatha, the pavement where the cruel scourges made the sacred drops to roll. What food there is for our souls upon Calvary! Every item of our Lord’s death is sacred. We would not omit any of the details of His suffering, for some strike one mind and some strike another, but could we go through the whole history of our Savior, from the agony in Gethsemane till He said, “It is finished,” we should find all the way full of food for our souls.

Where are there such pastures as those that grow on Calvary? Sharon, you are altogether outdone! O plains that fed the flocks of old, you are barren compared with this little hill whereon the Savior poured

out His soul unto death! Try, dear Christian friends, to feed on all these things. I cannot keep you to do it now, but at such times as you can get an hour, or even a few minutes, say to yourself, “This is all spiritual food for me. I am to feed on ‘those things wherewith the atonement was made.’”

Before I pass to the second division, I want to tell you one thing more about this participation which, I think, *ennobles it*, and lifts it altogether out of the commonplace, namely, that this feeding of the priests—or if you turn to the peace-offering, the feeding of the offerer himself—upon the sacrifice, was in fellowship with God.

When the sacrifice was offered, a part of it was burnt on the altar. That was God’s portion. The altar represented God, and the Lord received the portion that was consumed by the fire. In the text before us, we see that the priest was also to take his share. It was a part of the same sacrifice, so both God and the priest fed upon it.

You and I, beloved, are to feed with God on Christ. That is a blessed sentence in the parable of the prodigal son where the father said, “Let us eat, and be merry.” The father feeds, and the family fed with him—“Let *us* eat, and be merry.” Oh, it is indeed joyful for us to remember that the Father finds satisfaction in the work and merit, the life and death of the Only Begotten! God is well pleased with Jesus, for He has magnified the law and made it honorable. And that which satisfies the heart of God is passed on to satisfy you and me. Oh, to think of our being entertained in such a fashion as this!

You remember that it is said of the elders who went up with Moses and Aaron into the mount, that “they saw God, and did eat and drink.” And surely we are as favored as they were, for now in Christ Jesus we behold the reconciled God, and we eat and drink with Him. And while the Father smiles because the work of atonement is finished, we sit down and we rejoice, too.

Even we poor weeping sinners wipe our tears away and sing,—

*“Bless’d be the Father, and His love,
To whose celestial source we owe
Rivers of endless joy above,
And rills of comfort here below.”*

If God is content, so are we. If the Judge of all the earth says, “It is enough,” we also say, “It is enough.” Our conscience echoes to the verdict of the Eternal. Christ has finished the transgression and made an end of sins, and brought in everlasting righteousness, and therefore we enjoy the sweetest imaginable rest in Him.

The Father’s delight is in Him and so is ours. Oh, who among us who knows the Lord Jesus, will stand back for a moment from this blessed eating with God? “They shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them.”

II. This brings me to my second point which is an advance upon the former one, namely, THE OFFICIAL CHARACTER OF THIS PARTICIPATION. In this particular form, the participation was for the priests only.

Now, mark this. The child of God, when he is first converted, does not know much about being a priest, he does not know much about doing anything for Christ. I heard of a good Scotch woman whose style of speech I cannot imitate, but I like the sense of it. Someone said to her, “How long have you been a servant of the Lord?” She said, “Nay, nay, but He has been a servant to me, for does He not say, ‘I am among you as he that serveth’?”

“Ah!” replied the other, “that is true. But still, you have served the Lord.” “Yes,” she answered, “but it is such poor work I have ever done that I do not like to think of having done anything at all for Him. And I would rather talk of how long He has been doing something for me, than how long I have been doing anything for Him.”

That is quite true. Yet, inasmuch as the Lord Jesus Christ died for us, we reckon that we all died and that He died for us that we henceforth should live, not unto ourselves, but unto Him and so we do. If the Lord has really blessed us with His love, we have begun to be priests, and we have begun to serve Him.

Now the priest, because he is a priest, is the man who must take care that he feeds upon the sacrifice. But how are we priests? I am not now talking about ministers, I am talking about all of you who love the Lord. Christ has made all of us who believe in Him to be kings and priests unto God—there is no priesthood in the world that is of God save the High Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and next to that, the priesthood which is common to all believers.

And the idea of there being any priesthood on earth above and beyond the priesthood of all believers is a false one, and there is no Scripture whatever to vindicate it, to justify it, or even to apologize for it—it is one of the lies of old Rome. All believers are priests, but they do not all fully recognize that great truth. It is a pity they do not realize that glorious fact and so join in the apostle John's doxology, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Being priests, they are, first of all, *to offer themselves*. What says the apostle? "I beseech you, therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Now, you will never do this unless you feed upon Christ. I shall never be myself a sacrifice to God unless my soul is nourished upon the true and living sacrifice, Christ Jesus my Lord. To attempt sanctification apart from justification is to attempt an impossibility. And to endeavor to lead a holy life apart from the work of Christ is an idle dream. You priests who offer yourselves unto God must take care that it is all done through Christ who is in you.

Next, as priests, we are *to intercede for others*. A priest was chosen to offer prayer for others and every Christian ought to pray for those who are round about him. But you will never be men of prayer unless you feed on Christ, I am sure of that. If Christ is not in your heart, intercessory prayer will not be in your mouths. You will never be true pleaders with God for men unless you are yourselves true feeders upon the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

A true priest is, next, *to be a teacher*. The prophet Micah said, "The priest's lips should keep knowledge," and so should it be with all Christians. They are to teach others. But you cannot teach others what you do not know yourselves. And unless you are, first, partakers of the fruits, you will never be able to sow the seed. You must feed upon Christ in your inmost soul or else you will never speak of Him with any power to others.

Priests, again, were chosen from among men *to have compassion on the ignorant* and on such as were out of the way. That is your duty, too, as Christians—to look after the weak ones and the wandering ones—and to have compassion upon them. But unless you live by faith upon the compassionate Savior, you will never keep up the life of compassion in your own soul.

If Christ is not in you, neither will you be in the spirit of Christ, full of love to such as need your help. But coming fresh from communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, your words of consolation will sweetly drop into afflicted hearts and will comfort them. You will have the tongue of an instructed one and be able to speak seasonable and sweet words to such as are weary. Take care, then, that you feed upon Christ.

I believe, also, that a Christian man is to act as a priest for a dumb world, and *to express the worship of creation*. It is he who is to chant creation's hymn. It is his voice that must lift up the hallelujahs of the universe. The world lacks a tongue. Yon sea, with all its rolling billows, yet speaks not a word articulately. And yonder stars, with all their brilliance, cannot tell out the glory of God in human language, or indeed in any language at all. "There is no speech, nor language; their voice is not heard."

Nor can the sweet flowers, nor even the birds, in actual language tell of Him who made them and express their gratitude to Him. But you and I have a tongue, which is the glory of our frame, and with that tongue we are to open our mouths for the dumb and speak the praises of God for all creation. Take

care that you do it. Before you lies the world, like a great organ, all ready to sound forth the sweetest music, but it cannot play itself.

Those little hands of yours, if they are instinct with heavenly life, are to be laid among the keys and you are to fetch forth strains of mighty hallelujahs unto Him who has made all things and sustains all things by the power of His hand. Feed on Christ and you will be able to do this, for He speaks to reveal God and He becomes the tongue of men unto the Father. Live on Him and you shall learn the art of speaking for creation unto the Creator.

III. Now I have done when I have very solemnly noticed, in the third place, THE ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION. “They shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made...but”—“*but* a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy.”

Who was “a stranger” in such a case as this? Everybody was a stranger, in the matter of the priests, but such as belonged to the priests. And strangers might not partake of the sacrifices with the priests. The prohibition is clearly given in the 22nd chapter of Leviticus, at the 10th verse—“There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing: a sojourner of the priest”—that is, a mere guest—“or an hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing.”

Listen. You who only come into the house of God just to look on, you who do not belong to the family, but are only sojourners—welcome as sojourners—but you may not eat of the holy thing. You cannot enjoy Christ, you cannot feed upon the precious truth connected with Him, for you are only a sojourner. I am very sorry, on the first Sabbath night in the month, and I think that some of you must feel very sorry and sad, too. There is to be the communion, the Lord’s supper. You have been hearing the sermon, but you have to go away from the table, or else to take your place among the spectators. You are only sojourners—you do not belong to the family and dare not profess that you do. You are only a sojourner or a stranger.

And it was the same in the case of a hired servant, he might not eat of the holy thing, and he who only follows Christ for what he can get out of Him—he who works for Christ with the idea of meriting salvation, hoping that he may earn enough to save himself by his works—is only like a priest’s hired servant. He says, “I do my best and I believe that I shall go to heaven.” Yes, just so. You are a hired servant, even though heaven seems to be the wage you are expecting, and you may not eat of the holy thing.

Now notice what is written in Leviticus 22:11. “But if the priest buy any soul with his money, he shall eat of it.” Is not that a blessing? *If the Lord Jesus Christ has bought you with His precious blood*, and you by faith recognize yourself as not your own, but bought with a price—then you may eat of the sacrifice. “If the priest buys any soul with his money”—it may be a very strange person, somebody for whom you and I would not give two pence—but if the great High Priest has bought any soul with His money, “he shall eat of it.”

“And he that is born in his house, shall eat of his meat.” There is the doctrine of regeneration, as the former part of the verse spoke of redemption. *If you have been born again*, and are no more in the house of Satan, but in the house of the great High Priest, you may come and eat of this spiritual meat. If you have the blood-mark, having been bought by Christ, and if you have the life-mark, having been quickened by the Spirit, and born into the family of Christ, then come along with you. Though least and weakest of them all, come and welcome.

Listen to this next verse—“If the priest’s daughter also is married to a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things.” She is the priest’s daughter, mark you. Nobody denies that—and shall not the child partake with the father? No, not if she is married to a stranger. She now bears her husband’s characteristics now, she has given herself up to him. She is no longer her father’s, she belongs to her husband.

Oh, is there anybody here who once made a profession of religion, but who has gone aside? Have you got married to the world? Have you got married to amusements and Sabbath-breaking? Have you

got married right away from the Priest, your Father—right away from the church of Christ—right away from the people of God? Then you cannot eat of the holy thing.

Yet listen to one other verse. “But if the priest’s daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father’s house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father’s meat; but there shall no stranger eat thereof.” Perhaps there is someone here who says, “I am a widow.” I do not mean that your natural husband is dead, but that the world has become dead to you. You went and married into the world for wealth and you have lost it. You are poor now, riches are dead to you. You used to be such a fine woman, but now your face has lost its comeliness, your beauty is dead. Everybody used to admire your talent, but you have not any talent now, and they all give you the cold shoulder. Ah, well, I am not sorry that the world has cast you out and cast you off! Perhaps the men of the world have said concerning you, “We will have no more to do with him.” You are divorced, you see.

Long ago, I was divorced from the world. I got a bill of divorcement pretty quickly when I began to preach the Gospel in London. If it were worth while, I could publish some of the cruel and false things that men said. According to them, I was the biggest charlatan and the greatest hypocrite and deceiver who ever lived. That was my bill of divorcement—the world said, “We have done with you”—and I replied, “I have done with you.” And so we parted.

There were not many words on my part, but there were a great many on theirs. Well, if it is so with you, if you feel that the world has done with you and you have done with the world, and you are willing to come back to your Father’s house, just as in the days of your youth, come along with you. Come in and eat of His dainties, feed upon Christ on earth by faith, and then go up and feed on Him even to the full in glory everlasting.

But you must get away from your stranger husband, for if you cleave to him, you will have to be counted with that which your heart lusts after. What you love shall label you. Where your delight is, where your treasure is, there your heart is—and there your portion is. But if the Lord will help you to escape right away from the clutches of error and sin, then it shall be with you as it was with the priest’s daughter—“If she is returned unto her father’s house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father’s meat.”

“But there shall no stranger eat thereof.” If you will not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel—and there is no way of your being made nigh but by the blood of the cross. If you believe in Him, you are “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” But if you are not bought with His money, or born in His house, then you must remain strangers—and there is no blessing for you, no comfort for you.

The other day, one who had been attending a religious service, and mocking and jesting at everything sacred, said, when he was talked to about it, “Oh, but I am a Christian! Jesus died for me.” It was a lie. He had neither part nor lot in the matter, or else he could not have acted profanely as he did. And there are others who talk as he did, but I tell you, sirs, whatever you say, this is what God says, “A stranger shall not eat thereof.”

If you have not been born again, you cannot feed upon Christ. But oh, if you will look to Him who died for the sinner, then you shall feed upon Him who lives for the saint. God bless you in both these respects, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 6:41-71

Verse 41. *The Jews then murmured at him,—*

That is, at our blessed Lord. “The Jews then murmured at him,”

41-42. *Because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?*

There are always some who complain that the Gospel is “too commonplace, too well-known.” They already know all that is to be known about it, just as these people knew the mother and father of our Lord Jesus. How could He, who was the son of the carpenter, have come down from heaven? But this ought to have commended Him to them that though He was divine, He became so truly human and so perfectly took upon Himself our nature as to be the son of Joseph—one whose father and mother they knew.

And ought we not to be glad of a Gospel plain enough for a child to grasp, simple enough for the most ignorant to be saved by it? Let us not seek after signs and mysteries, but graciously accept the Gospel which the Lord Himself gives us.

43-44. *Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

This was high ground for Christ to take. It was as much as to say, “You need not murmur. I did not expect that you would believe in Me. I know that human nature is such that, without a divine work upon the heart, man cannot come to Me, and will not believe in Me. I am not disappointed, or deceived, when you murmur among yourselves, ‘No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.’”

45. *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

Nobody else will come to Christ. There is no real Christian in the world but is of God’s making. A Christian is a sacred thing, the Holy Ghost has made him so. It takes as much of God’s omnipotence to make a believer as to make a world. And only He that created the heavens and the earth can create even as much as a grain of true faith in the heart of man.

46. *Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.*

The divine Son has seen the Father. You and I are to believe—we cannot see as yet.

47. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

He has it even now in possession—a life that can never die out is in the breast of every man who believes in Christ. Oh, what a joy is this!

48. *I am that bread of life.*

Jesus is that bread which feeds the spiritual life and sustains the everlasting life.

49-50. *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.*

The bread that feeds the undying life is Christ Jesus Himself, whom we do spiritually feed upon and who is the nourishment of our souls.

51. *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

Christ—God incarnate—is the nourishment of faith, the spiritual food of the everlasting life. The new life which God puts into us is not natural, so as to be fed upon natural food, like bread and meat. But it is spiritual and it must live upon spiritual food. That food is nothing less than Christ Jesus Himself.

52-56. *The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

These Jews would not understand Christ when He spoke very plainly. He did not therefore retract a single word that He had said, but as the first light had dazzled them—and willingly were they dazzled by it—He turned the lantern full upon their faces and made them blind, for the excessive light of the explanation was too much for them. It was not Christ’s intent to save them—He was making the light itself to be blindness to them, because they had already refused Him, and now the time was come when

the heart of these people must be made yet more gross, that they should not see with their eyes, or hear with their ears. May the Lord never give us up to such a fate as that!

It is a dreadful thing when the light of the Gospel becomes the instrument of blinding men, and it does so still. After a certain degree of willful rejection of it, that which would have been a savor of life unto life can be turned into a savor of death unto death by men's closing their hearts against it.

Yet I wonder and am astonished at our Lord and Master's course of proceeding, that here, when the men do not and will not see, He does but speak the truth the more boldly. Let no man think that Jesus was here alluding to the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine in the Lord's supper. That ordinance was not instituted at that time and there could be no allusion to what did not then exist. It is quite in another sense, in a high spiritual sense, that our mind feeds upon the flesh and blood of Christ. That is to say, the fact that God was made flesh—the fact that Christ died for sin—these are the food of our souls, and thereon our faith grows, and our spirit is strengthened.

57-58. *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.*

This is spiritual feeding upon spiritual truth.

59-62. *These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

Let our Master teach us what He pleases, nothing ought to offend a disciple of Christ. It is ours to sit at His feet and receive all His words without caviling. But if we do not believe what He tells us upon some elementary points, what should we do if He were to reveal something more to us—and lead us into the higher and deeper doctrines of His Word?

63. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:*

That is to say, it is the *meaning* of Christ's words that gives life, not the words themselves. And if we stumble at the letter, and begin to ask, "How can we eat the flesh of Christ?" taking that expression literally, it will kill us. We need to get into the spirit of what He says, the true spiritual meaning of it, for that is where the life lies.

63-64. *The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not.*

Could that be truly said of any here? "There are some of you that believe not." If so, you know what becomes of unbelievers—you certainly cannot attain the blessings promised to faith. May God grant that, ere this day is quite over, there may not be left one among you that believes not!

64-66. *For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

So it seems that a man may be recognized as a disciple of Christ and yet he may go back and walk no more with Him. Oh, that we may be real disciples—disciples indeed! Oh, that we may be part and parcel of Christ, true branches of the true Vine, living members of the living body of Christ!

67. *Then said Jesus unto the twelve,*

The choice and pick of all His followers. "Then said Jesus unto the twelve,"

67-68. *Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter—*

Who was the ready tongue of the apostles. "Then Simon Peter—"

68. *Answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*

That was a very conclusive way of answering one question by another—"Will ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Brother, sister, if we wandered from Christ, where could we go? And how can we leave Him when He has the words of eternal life?

69-71. *And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—296, 786, 313

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